



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Mogollon Rim  
Ranger District

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File Code: 2230

Date: August 28, 2003

Phillip and Karin Knight  
P.O Box 1525  
Wickenburg, AZ 85358

Dear Mr. And Mrs. Knight:

Your annual application dated May 2, 2003 is approved. These are your 2003 Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Buck Springs allotment and they are incorporated as part of your Term Grazing Permit. The dates applied for are from May 15 to October 15. However, you actually turned out 168 head of cattle on June 1, into one of the Horse Pastures (Lane).

You applied for total nonuse in 2002, and the Buck Springs Allotment was not grazed.

For 2003, total numbers applied for and approved are 170 medium yearlings and 7 horses. Partial nonuse is approved for resource protection (mitigation for Little Colorado spinedace and Mexican spotted owl).

You will use the Horse (11,12,13,15,17,20), North (3), and Moonshine (21) Pastures in 2003. All of the other pastures on the Buck Springs Allotment will be rested in 2003. The following schedule shows the pasture rotation for 2003.

<u>PASTURE</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Horse	June 1 – June 12
North (East ½)	June 13 – August 15
North (West ½)	August 16 – October 18
Moonshine	October 19 – November 1

You will ensure that cattle are gathered and shipped off the Forest by November 1. It is important that you ship out on or before the scheduled off-date, to avoid a need for re-billing for use after the end of the permitted season.

- The dates for grazing in each pasture are tentative. The actual dates will be based on grass production, summer precipitation, and wildlife use of pastures. If forage production is poor due to low rainfall, or utilization is very high due to a combination of livestock and wildlife use, length of stay per pasture will be shortened. If all pastures in this sequence are used before the end of the season, livestock will be removed from the allotment. The permittee will monitor utilization rates prior to livestock entry into a pasture, during livestock use, and when livestock leave the pasture. Forest Service personnel will monitor utilization levels periodically, and at the end of the growing



season. They will also monitor excluded areas (drainages, meadows, and pastures) for unauthorized use.

- The permittee will remove the livestock from the headwater meadows immediately if and when incidental use occurs.
- If more than minor, incidental use by livestock occurs in headwater meadows, or in Little Colorado spinedace habitat other than specified crossings (specifically Yeager Canyon north of FR96), then livestock will be removed from the allotment for the remainder of the season.
- The site occupied by spinedace at Dines Tank is excluded from grazing by fences, and the adjacent pasture will not be used in 2003. Two other recently occupied sites are located within the Knolls Pasture in tributaries to Leonard Canyon. Livestock will not graze the Knolls Pasture in 2003.
- Deferred/rest/rotation; time in pasture limited by utilization levels. Utilization levels are outlined in the April 30, 2003 Biological Opinion as follows:

<b>Grazed Pasture</b>	<b>Allowable Use Levels</b>
<b>Horse</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>North</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Moonshine</b>	<b>35%</b>

The allowable use in the table above is the grazing utilization permitted by both livestock and wildlife. You, the responsible permittee, will continue to monitor and document utilization rates prior to livestock entry into a pasture, during livestock use, and when livestock leave the pasture.

If use levels in key areas exceed the agreed to levels before livestock enter a pasture, the pasture will not be used. If utilization in the key areas reaches the levels in the table above, you will move the cattle to the next pasture in the rotation. USFS personnel will also measure utilization levels periodically, (at least every two weeks)

I agree that the Diablo Trust proposal (dated 2/29/98) for monitoring forage utilization is acceptable and will be followed this year. As soon as possible, you and Jerry Gonzales will review the key areas and decide if these monitoring locations are adequate. If needed, you and Jerry will select additional locations of key areas to be monitored this year.

You will ensure that the procedures as outlined in the Diablo Trust proposal are followed and that the Forest Service receives copies of all monitoring forms immediately at the end of the grazing season. It is very important that this monitoring be done during the time frames specified, and that all of the monitoring forms be turned in to the Forest Service at the end of the season.

You will be responsible to ensure that the livestock are kept out of sensitive areas such as meadows, riparian areas, riparian pastures, and the rested pastures noted previously (especially

Knolls pasture and the Dines Tank enclosure). It is important that you have maintained the fences in the pastures before cattle enter the allotment, as this will help you maintain control of the livestock, ensure that you have a fair chance to implement the herding grazing system, and prevent unauthorized use in rested pastures as well as in sensitive areas.

You will need to ensure that the fences across Leonard Canyon at the Dines Tank enclosure are up, as well as the Knoll Pasture fences, before you enter the allotment. You also need to maintain the Dines Tank enclosure fence throughout the grazing season. This will ensure that strays, if any, do not get into the enclosure.

We cannot provide the material for routine fence maintenance. The grazing fee that you pay takes into consideration the costs incurred by you for fence maintenance, including labor and material.

I have attached following mitigation measures (*Mitigation for the Mexican Spotted Owl and Peregrine Falcon on Grazing Allotments for Annual Operating Plans*). The mitigation measures have been made part of the AOI. To avoid impacting spotted owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs), the enclosed mitigation measures must be followed in the locations specified in the enclosure during the breeding season (March 1 to August 31). The locations where salting and gathering are allowed (part 4) are specified in the enclosure.

The attached *Mitigation For Chiricahua Leopard Frogs* is part of the 2003 AOI for the Buck Springs allotment, and should be adhered to.

Caution needs to be used during any activities that potentially could start a fire. All vehicles should be equipped with a serviceable water bucket, shovel, and axe for use in extinguishing camp and forest fires. All open camp and branding fires, when allowed, are required to have a fire ring down to mineral soil at least ten feet in diameter, and must be handled in a safe manner.

Please notify District personnel prior to use of any heavy equipment, so that we can arrange a time to have a prevention patrolman inspect your equipment on site. All state and local fire regulations and restrictions will be observed. Report any fires to the Mogollon Rim Ranger District at 477-2255, or 354-2216, or the Coconino National Forest fire dispatcher at 526-0600.

These Annual Operating Instructions are hereby made a part of the Term Grazing Permit, as provided in Part 2, Section 8(a). If you fail to comply with any of the terms and conditions specified in Parts 1,2, and 3 of your Term Grazing Permit, we may suspend or cancel your permit, in whole or in part, after written notice. This is found in Part 1, Section 3 of your Term Grazing Permit. The AOI complies with the standards and guidelines found in the LMP.

The Annual Operating Instructions have been reviewed by District Wildlife Biologists and found to be consistent with the Endangered Species Act, as amended. It has been determined that these instructions are in compliance with all terms and conditions, and reasonable and prudent measures of the Biological Opinion dated April 30, 2003.

The Annual Operating Instructions are appealable and subject to review under 36 CFR 251.82(a)(3) Grazing and livestock permits issued under 36 CFR part 222, subpart A. Appealable decisions apply to written decisions of Forest Service line officers related to issuance, denial, or administration of written instructions to occupy and use National Forest System lands.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, feel free to contact Jerry Gonzales at the Long Valley Ranger Station (928-354-2216).

Sincerely,  
/Larry G. Sears/

LARRY G. SEARS  
District Ranger

cc: Rodger Zanutto, S.O.  
cc: Mark Whitney, S.O.

DIABLO TRUST

02/05/98

DIABLO TRUST MANAGES FOR SPECIFIC WATERSHED VALUES AS THEY RELATE TO ITS  
LANDSCAPE VALUES

PASTURE GRAZE MONITORING KEY AREAS SPOTTED OWL HABITAT

PLOT# \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ MONITORER(s) \_\_\_\_\_

PASTURE \_\_\_\_\_ ACRES \_\_\_\_\_ KEY AREA ACRES \_\_\_\_\_

L/S CLASS & NO. \_\_\_\_\_ L/S CONDITION \_\_\_\_\_

DATES GRAZED \_\_\_\_\_ ADAs \_\_\_\_\_ AUMs \_\_\_\_\_

RECOVERY PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_ days DATE OF LAST GRAZE \_\_\_\_\_

WEATHER \_\_\_\_\_

PRECIPITATION: GAUGE \_\_\_\_\_ EST \_\_\_\_\_ WIND \_\_\_\_\_

AVG: \_\_\_\_\_ BELOW AVG: \_\_\_\_\_ ABOVE AVG: \_\_\_\_\_

WATER # \_\_\_\_\_ WATER CONDITION \_\_\_\_\_

GRAZE LEVEL BEFORE L/S 0-20 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-40 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-60 \_\_\_\_\_ 60-80 \_\_\_\_\_ 80-100 \_\_\_\_\_

GRAZE LEVEL AFTER L/S 0-20 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-40 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-60 \_\_\_\_\_ 60-80 \_\_\_\_\_ 80-100 \_\_\_\_\_

GROWTH RATE Cool Seasons fast \_\_\_\_\_ slow \_\_\_\_\_ dormant \_\_\_\_\_

GROWTH RATE Warm Seasons fast \_\_\_\_\_ slow \_\_\_\_\_ dormant \_\_\_\_\_

PLANT VIGOR Warm Seasons below average \_\_\_\_\_ average \_\_\_\_\_ above average \_\_\_\_\_

PLANT VIGOR Cool Seasons below average \_\_\_\_\_ average \_\_\_\_\_ above average \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIES \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ present: \_\_\_\_\_ occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ seeded: \_\_\_\_\_ stubble height \_\_\_\_\_ L M H

\_\_\_\_\_ present: \_\_\_\_\_ occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ seeded: \_\_\_\_\_ stubble height \_\_\_\_\_ L M H

\_\_\_\_\_ present: \_\_\_\_\_ occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ seeded: \_\_\_\_\_ stubble height \_\_\_\_\_ L M H

\_\_\_\_\_ present: \_\_\_\_\_ occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ seeded: \_\_\_\_\_ stubble height \_\_\_\_\_ L M H

\_\_\_\_\_ present: \_\_\_\_\_ occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ seeded: \_\_\_\_\_ stubble height \_\_\_\_\_ L M H

\_\_\_\_\_ present: \_\_\_\_\_ occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ seeded: \_\_\_\_\_ stubble height \_\_\_\_\_ L M H

\_\_\_\_\_ present: \_\_\_\_\_ occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ seeded: \_\_\_\_\_ stubble height \_\_\_\_\_ L M H

LIVESTOCK DISTRIBUTION \_\_\_\_\_

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GENERAL COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

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INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Plot: # or name      Location: Sec.#, road#, distance from road, compass reading to post  
GPS reading if possible.
2. Date: the day of monitoring      Monitorer   person or persons doing the monitoring
3. Pasture:   name of pasture      its acres, and the acres of the key area
4. L/S Class:   cows & calves or yearlings      L/S Condition:   poor   fair   good   excellent
5. Dates grazed   mo/day/yr -   mo/day/yr  
ADA's:   animal days per acre formula/   number of animals times number of days divided by acres =  
AUM's:   animal unit months formula/   number of animals times number of days divided by 30.4 =
6. Recovery period:   number of days since last graze      Date of last graze:   mo/day/yr
7. Weather: during graze period   wet, dry, windy, snow, cold, hot   what happened
8. Precipitation: rain gauge   contact USFS for closest gauge amount, or best estimate,   was it windy
9. Water#:   how many waters in pasure      Water condition:   full, low, puddles from rain
10. Graze level: on key species, percent utilization, before livestock
11. Graze level:   on key species, percent utilization, after livestock
12. Growth rate:   of plants   check fast, slow or dormant for both warm and cool season plants
13. Plant vigor:   check below, average, or above for both warm and cool season plants
14. Species:   list the key species in plot or area and check off if present, if they seeded, what is the  
percent of occurrence in area and measure the stubble height.   Then circle L   M   or   H for light,  
moderate, or heavy use of that species.

**Mitigation for the Mexican Spotted Owl and Peregrine Falcon  
On Grazing Allotments for Annual Operating Instructions  
for  
The Buck Springs Allotment**

*The purpose of the mitigation measures is to improve and protect habitat for prey species such as birds and small mammals in sensitive areas, and to protect nesting birds from disturbance associated with gathering or construction activities. Thank you for your cooperation.*

1. Follow these guidelines to meet the intent of the grazing guidelines listed in the Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan :
  - A. Continue to monitor grazing use by livestock and wildlife in "key grazing" areas such as riparian areas (MA12), meadows (MA9), pine/oak types (MA3), and aspen (MA5). If cattle show an increasing utilization trend, then change management strategies to reduce the trend. If wild ungulates show an increasing utilization trend, the Forest Service will work with the Game and Fish Department to reduce this trend.
  - B. Continue to implement and enforce grazing utilization standards to attain good to excellent range conditions in "key areas" over time.
  - C. Continue to restore good conditions to degraded riparian communities by maintaining or promoting three age classes in woody vegetation. If the mid-age class is absent, 5% utilization or less is required to promote three structural stages. If all three classes are present, utilization of 20% or less of woody vegetation is acceptable.
2. To reduce animal concentrations and trampling of vegetation which may impact prey species forage and cover, follow these guidelines for placing salt, or mineral blocks.
  - A. Do not place these items in riparian areas, mountain meadows, or non riparian drainages in ponderosa pine unless being used for a watershed restoration project.
  - B. Do not place these items in spotted owl habitat or near peregrine falcon nesting areas. The attached map shows areas (shown as mitigation) where salt, supplemental feeding, or mineral blocks should not occur.
  - C. Rotate salt and mineral supplement sites regularly.

Salting is allowed in the following areas, based on consultation between the wildlife biologist and Phil Knight on 8-14-98:

- **Holding Pastures:** All current holding pastures except the west half of the Schneider pasture and the west half of the Horse Pasture.
  - **Forest Service Pasture:** East of the Forest Road (FR) 137.
  - **C. North Pasture:** Within 1/8 mile of the FR 137/137B intersection. Within 1/8 mile of FR 96C in sections 12 and 1.
  - **Pinchot Pasture:** Within 1/8 mile of the intersection of FR 95/139 and the intersection of FR 95/95D.
  - **McCarty Pasture:** In the future, if this pasture is used, it is acceptable to salt within 1/8 mile of FR 141C/141A intersection.
  - **Burn Pasture:** Within the entire pasture.
  - **Knoll Pasture:** Within 1/8 mile of the intersection of FR 300/295.
  - **Battleground Pasture:** Within 1/8 mile south of FR 123/123E intersection.
3. To eliminate potentially disturbing activities in spotted owl habitat or near peregrine nesting areas during their breeding season, do not allow the following types of activities in areas displayed in red on the map between March 1 and August 31 without prior consultation with the district Range Staff.
- A. Spring branding or fall gathering.
  - B. Construction activities such as; new construction of fences, corrals, or buildings, or cleaning or construction of tanks.

Gathering may continue to occur in the holding pastures named Schneider Springs and Horse Pasture. Salting on the east half of the pastures will be used to draw cattle away from existing PAC's.



## **Mitigation For Chiricahua Leopard Frogs**

Live fish, crayfish, bullfrogs, leopard frogs, salamanders, or other aquatic organisms shall not be moved among livestock tanks or other aquatic sites.

If a site is identified as occupied by Chiricahua leopard frogs, water shall not be hauled to the site from another aquatic site or tank that supports leopard frogs, bullfrogs, crayfish, or fish.

If Chiricahua leopard frogs are found on the allotment, the permittee shall be required to clean any equipment, boots, etc. used at an aquatic site and treat with a 10 percent bleach solution, or allow such equipment, boots, etc. to dry thoroughly, before using the same equipment, boots, etc. at another aquatic site on the allotment.

All ranch hands, construction personnel, and others implementing the proposed action shall be given a copy of these terms and conditions, and informed of the need to comply with them.

At least 60 days prior to maintaining or cleaning out livestock tanks, the permittee shall inform the Coconino of planned activities. The Coconino shall survey the tank for Chiricahua leopard frogs<sup>1</sup> and if frogs are found, shall work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop and implement a plan to minimize take of frogs. Measures to minimize take should include salvage and temporary holding of frogs, limiting disturbance and work areas to the minimum area practicable, leaving stands of emergent vegetation in place, and/or measures to minimize the likelihood of disease transmission. Plans to minimize take shall be approved by the USFWS.

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<sup>1</sup> Surveys shall include a night visit to prospective habitat during which all or at least 1,200 feet of the best habitat along creeks and the entire perimeter of tanks are searched for frogs. Surveys shall be carried out with flashlights/headlamps, and a dip net shall be used to sample for tadpoles and frogs concealed in undercut banks or at the base of emergent vegetation. Surveyors shall also listen for the distinctive call of the Chiricahua leopard frog (Davidson 1996) and watch for egg masses. Surveys shall be carried out from April-September when frogs are most active.